



THE ARTIST AS HOST

LECTORAAT IMAGE IN CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

In this third notebook of the research group Image in Context of the Centre of Applied Research and Innovation Art & Society we present the research into the role of the artist as a host. This research was conducted by the artist duo Hermen Maat and Karen Lancel within their own artistic practice, and by students from both the theme class and the interactive media class of the department Autonomous Fine Arts of Academy Minerva. Both classes were supervised by Hermen Maat.

In this publication you will find:

Hosting the hybrid city

This is a text in which Hermen Maat and Karen Lancel provide insights into the meaning of the word 'role' and into the position of the role of the 'host' in their own artistic practice. Their artistic research into this role was the starting point for both research modules.

The artist as host: on theories and interactive networked mushrooms.

In the second text Hermen Maat clarifies how he translated this concept into two teaching modules. He explains how in one module the focus of the search was interesting examples of artist's roles, and how in the other module technical issues shed a different light on the relationship between artist and audience.

Student research

After this, you will find the work of students, introduced by Hermen Maat. Contributions from the theme class: Anna Weyer, Germany; Chan Lai Kuen, Malaysia; Katrina Jongsma, Canada; Rosemarie Pringle, Germany; Angie Daniels, South Africa/Germany; Niya Konstantinova, Bulgaria; Gothards Prieditis, Latvia; Ruben Jager, Netherlands.

Contributions from the interactive media class: Helena Van Zuylen, Netherlands; Suzanne Vellema, Netherlands; Vanina Tsvetkova, Bulgaria; Jorine Homan, Netherlands; Cindy Wegner, Germany; Lottte Middendorp, Netherlands; Sander Bos, Netherlands; Chan Lai Kuen, Malaysia; Iris Leenknecht, Netherlands.

The urgency of the role of the host

In the afterword Anke Coumans, professor of the research group Image in Context, talks about the importance of this research for the work of the Centre of Applied Research and Innovation Art & Society into the new roles of artists and designers in society.

HOSTING THE HYBRID CITY

In 2012 Anke Coumans, professor of the research group Image in Context of the Centre of Applied Research and Innovation Art & Society, Hanze University, Academy Minerva, approached us with a question based on her research assignment 'new roles of artists and designers in society'.

She asked us a number of questions: 'You make interactive performances and installations in public spaces. As an artist you take on the role of host. What is the role of the host in your design practice? And why is this role an important concept for artists who relate to public spaces and to their audience?'

Good questions. For this text we turned them into the following questions:

- 1) What is a role?
- 2) How do artists use roles?
- 3) What is a public space?
- 4) What role does the public have in our contemporary public space?
- 5) What is the meaning of 'the host' in our design practice?

1) What is a role?

First of all: a role does not stand on its own. A role is a relational concept. A role is always connected to someone else's role. In other words: a role is teamwork, part of a system.

A system of roles like this is flexible. When one of the roles changes, it has a changing effect on all other roles. An example of this

within the political system was when Barack Obama won the American elections. When he, as the first African American citizen, became president it changed the self-image of a disadvantaged part of society, and consequently the power and influence of this group within the existing role structure.

So it is exciting to change a role, infiltrate with it or take part with it in a system. It may concern a political, social or technological system. With a role you can change the system (temporarily) and make it visible. When an artist chooses a role in a public space, he or she can question, research and challenge the relationship between the roles and the system of the public space. In this way as an artist you can create both play-space and space for critical reflection.

2) How do artists use roles?

In the past artists chose roles such as whore¹, shaman², stalker/stalkee³, hybrid city host⁴, host of a dinner party⁵, online lover⁶, anthropologist⁷.

These artists do not play a role like in a theatre. They play a role the way you would when taking up a position in a game. Just like you would take up a position in a game of soccer as a keeper, a referee or a striker.

This way these artists play with the symbolic meaning of their roles in the system. Interesting in this context is the work 'Role Exchange' by Marina Abramovic of 1975⁸. In this she interchanged her role as an artist in a gallery during an opening with that of a prostitute behind a window in the red light district of Amsterdam. This went as follows: in the red light district the artist as a prostitute sat behind the window. And the prostitute presented herself in the gallery in the role of the artist: vulnerable and at the same time with a great (seductive) strength. The way we look at prostitutes – judgemental, voyeuristic, consuming and without taking responsibility for the vulnerability of

the prostitute – was compared to the way we look at works of art and the artist. At the same time this interchanging of roles exposes to which extent our way of looking is controlled, and how our identity is constructed, by the social system in which we find ourselves.

The meaning of the role may vary within the context of different cultures. A good example of this is the way in which Joseph Beuys⁹ as an artist took on the role of ‘shaman’. According to his story he was inspired by this during World War II when he crashed with his plane in the Crimea. He almost froze to death, but was saved by nomadic Tartars who rolled him into fat and pieces of felt. This life-changing event in the Crimea caused Beuys to choose the role of artist-shaman. With this role, and within the context of Western society, he wanted to show the disappearance, but also the potency, of creative and spiritual powers and of our connection with nature. Beuys wanted to stimulate reflection with his work and called his artworks ‘social sculptures’. For this he presented his symbolic role as artist-shaman, as a part of his work of art, and with this infiltrated the societal system.

To conclude, one more thing about ‘the artist’s role’ in relationship to ‘real life’. A role for an artist can be an instrumental choice. Quite often the artist identifies with it, and this way can enter into an intense relationship with the audience. But the artist IS not his or her role. Because, for example, the way it is clear with a priest, a therapist or a prostitute that outside of the confession booth, the consulting room and the brothel, they are no longer available for the intense relationship with their audience, the same thing applies to the artist in his or her own designed role.¹⁰ The artist presents his or her role actively and plays with the possibilities of the role as a part of his or her work of art.

In Short

By playing a role, or taking up a position, the artist plays with symbolic meanings within a system. The artist’s temporary role subsequently transforms the role, or position, of the audience. By creating a role as part of a work of art, the artist literally generates an ‘experience-playroom’, image and space for the (critical) reflection of the audience.

3) What is a public space?

*‘Public space becomes mediated public’.*¹¹

With which contemporary public spaces does an artist have to deal?

Public spaces have immensely changed during the past 20 years. In his book ‘The rise of the network society’¹², Manuel Castells distinguishes two public environments which are connected. He differentiates a ‘space of place’ and a ‘space of flows’. The local, tangible ‘space of place’ is the space we knew from before the world wide web. It is a stable space which consists of buildings, urban infrastructures and facilities. This space is connected to local histories, traditions and memories.

The ‘space of flows’ is the digital space of, among others, the world wide web. This space is a-historic and ‘placeless’. It is also timeless: with an email you can reach someone on the other side of the world within a second. It is a space with a continual stream of information, exchange and data processing.

The digital network interweaves the ‘space of place’ with the ‘space of flows’ into a hybrid public space.¹³ This changes the use and the experience of a public space. A large part of the (semi) public space now consists of ‘coding spaces’¹⁴ such as check-in desks, scanners, and security gates. We walk through public spaces with closed circuit cameras. In spaces such as these your actions are continually connected to online data networks, and

these networks in their turn determine your actions. You make active use of these hybrid products as well, for example when you are efficiently trying to find your way in a big city through the 'eyes' of Google maps.

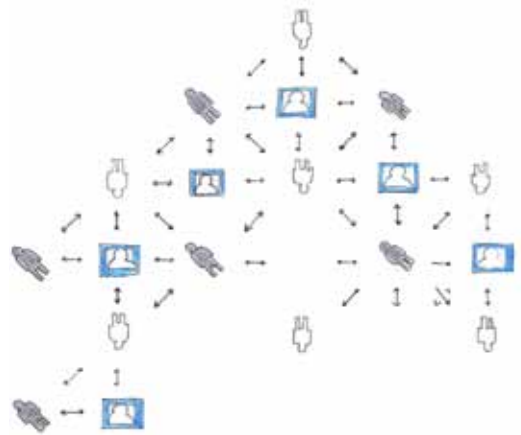
4) What role does the public have in our contemporary public space?

The public can have different roles in the public space. They could be tourists, sales-people, locals, police, activists, travellers, hikers, tramps. Each individual has several of these roles at his or her disposal, and the roles combined influence perception and social experience. In addition each individual also has private roles which also influence perception, such as lover, father, mother. Everyone in a public space can enter into relationships with others based on more than one role at the same time.

Who do we meet in the hybrid public space, in what kind of relationships?

In the hybrid public space we meet more and more frequently from a distance with our mobile devices. Time and place become irrelevant for the experience of nearness, of 'being together'. We look at each other, we listen to each other and send text messages through media screens. As soon as we connect, the first question we ask is, where are you? And, who are you? We make the answer to these questions more and more dependent on navigation systems, networked surveillance and body-related identification technologies such as iris scans, fingerprints and passport photos.

Social media themselves are also a kind of public space. Who is watching when you write something private, or when you post an intimate photograph of yourself? The nice thing about social media is that it connects. The strange thing is that you know less and less with whom. Add to this that we use all kinds of media at the same time: Skype, mail, chat, phone, twitter, video con-



'Public space becomes mediated public' Lancel Maat 2012
<http://www.being-here.net/page/3051/en>

ferencing, which leads to a labyrinth of codes of social behaviour and forms of reciprocity.¹⁵ Because, although media expand the body in time and space, they prevent us from touching and looking each other in the eyes. In his book 'Over mediatheorie' (About media theory), Arjen Mulder writes about the body and media. 'Media create a world without touching; a disembodied existence.'¹⁶ In the disembodied space flow the body is digital. It consists of pixels, has a changeable identity and experiences the space around it as data space.

The social sciences describe how body language, touching each other and looking at each other in the eyes are important forms of reciprocity with which we assess whether we can trust each other¹⁷ and with which we build social relationships for a sustainable social eco-system.

This applies to love relationships, but also to business relationships. Business interaction often takes place on the world wide web, but in order to come to decisive business agreements, people still travel the globe to be able to look their business partner in the eye and to shake hands. In this physical form of interaction clearly lies a fundamental form of social 'scanning', to be able to trust. This brings forward fascinating questions about meeting, identity, reciprocity and

trust in the hybrid public space: How intimate, how lonely is a virtual space? What is a safe place here and what an unsafe one? How do you control a social environment which lets itself be presented by a foreign medium? How does my body feel, wireless, in the chat-box, on the touch-screen? What do my words mean here, where are my memories stored?

In short

Virtual and physical spaces are connected in a hybrid environment. In this environment people have several social, public and private roles. With these roles people are present both locally and virtually, so in a hybrid way. Our physical, sensory perceptions about the other person change with communication technology. We are 'looking' with new eyes, ears and hands. Via an interface we 'see' the other person and the world around us. New forms of visibility, tangibility, the sound of voices change social processes, and change our understanding of identity, social connectedness and trust.

5) What is the role of 'the host' and the audience in our design practice?

*'I am part of the networks and the networks are part of me... I link, therefore I am.'*¹⁸

How can we as artists research the experience of social relationships in public spaces and make these visible? And how can we make use of the construction of roles, of a role-play?

Since 1998 we design 'meeting spaces' in urban dynamic public spaces such as city-squares, museum hallways, train stations in Seoul, New York, Melbourne, Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Paris, London and Amsterdam.

These 'meeting spaces' are performances and installations we design as aesthetic visual environments. Each meeting space or social sculpture functions as an 'artistic social

lab' where the public participates in the role of co-researcher. We believe that everyone who uses social technology such as mobile phones, email, social media and other internet platforms, is an 'experience specialist' in a techno-social environment. So we invite the public to experiment as a co-researcher and to play with social technologies, to reflect together on their own perception of the urban environment, body, identity, presence and community.

This way we as artists research sensitive and innovative ways of connecting with each other, especially THROUGH technology. For this we deconstruct existing communication technologies and strategies, and design a new, innovative assemblage of physical and virtual interaction¹⁹.

With this we are making a proposal for a new 'hybrid social body'. We are interested in a body which makes use of the advantages of communication from a distance, telecommunication. And which combines this with the physical qualities on which we base trust, such as seeing each other in the eyes and touching.

In order to invite the public to participate in the role of this 'hybrid social body', we design a kind of social ritual. This ritual consists of a set of actions. It is not a religious ritual. Our ritual is more like an experience-proposition²⁰ and invites participants to experiment and reflect.

Participants try out a communication-act designed by us. It is a carefully designed communication-act, a vulnerable act and a little bit estranging, so it will give you the opportunity to look and experience anew. Each participant him- or herself decides how long the ritual will last. The participant performing the ritual is observed by others in the public space, who can then also perform the ritual themselves. In working with titles such as Tele—Trust, Saving Face and Stalk—Show we invite participants to experiment

Saving Face (2012),
performance installation
in a public space.
[www.lancelmaat.nl/
content/saving-face-o](http://www.lancelmaat.nl/content/saving-face-o)



with the experience of their tangible
bodies in relationship to a virtual identity
on a media screen.

We invite the audience for 3 roles:

1) 'Physically present body'.

In social media you would call this the 'user'.
In our work this person is the one who
performs a sensitive and vulnerable ritual.
This ritual may consist of 'communication
by touch'.

2) 'Mediated body'.

Someone who is present online, who is rep-
resented via the world wide web on a media
screen. A body which exists exclusively of
pixels in a dataflow. It is a portrait (or text),
of the participant performing the ritual.
Or it is a portrait (or text) of a previous par-
ticipant, whose portrait (or text) has become
part of our database.

3) 'Witness'

The 'witnesses' are the audience, the observ-
ers. The dictionary says about the meaning
of the word witness: a person who sees an
event take place, (witness to) evidence or
proof of.²¹

Without a witness it seems nothing hap-
pened. The witness observes, knows,
remembers, judges, shares with others. The
witness gives meaning to the event and to
what is there to be seen. You might even say,

'without witnesses there is no public space'.²²

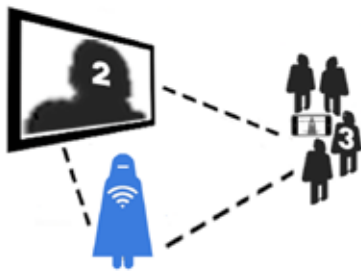
In practice this role goes even further. If, for
example, you are a witness to an accident in
the street you unwillingly share responsibil-
ity for the victim. Yet, you could do nothing
and just stand there and watch. And if you
want nothing to do with the situation, you
could disappear unseen. So a witness is al-
ways on the 'border' of participation. Is he
or she in or out?

In our performances you could take all three
roles. Together they form an alternative
communication system.

It is interesting that the three roles over-
lap. If, for example, all 'witnesses' are in pos-
session of a mobile phone, they overlap with



'Tele—Trust' 2012 Waag Society for Old and New Media
Amsterdam. Performance – installation, [www.lancel-
maat.nl/content/teletrust-o](http://www.lancel-
maat.nl/content/teletrust-o). Photo: Pieter Kers 2009



Social spatial model van 'Tele—Trust'. Performance – installation, <http://www.lancelmaat.nl/content/teletrust-o>. This model is part of a PhD research: 'Tele—Trust for networking bodies' by Lancel/Maat. Technical University Delft, www.participatorysystems.nl/ (Prof. Frances Brazier and Dr. Caroline Nevejan).

the mediated body. Just as when the 'physically present body' is cloaked in an interactive 'DataVeil', as in our work in Tele—Trust:

Tele—Trust

How do we trust each other online?

Do you need to see my eyes?

Or do we need to touch?

How do we trust as networking bodies?

In Tele—Trust we invite the audience for the following three roles:

1) The participant in the DataVeil

The blue figure is the 'Physically present body' of someone in the audience. He or she wears an interactive DataVeil. This DataVeil functions as a hybrid, second skin. Flexible, invisible touch sensors woven into the smart fabric of the DataVeil, transform your body into an intuitive, tangible interface.

2) Portrait on urban screens

The 'Mediatized body' is on an electronic screen. This is the portrait of the participant in the DataVeil on an electronic screen. The portrait has been included in a database together with all the portraits of previous participants. The participant in the DataVeil can bring these portraits randomly onto the electronic screen by touching his or her veiled body. The audience around will ask themselves: who is behind the DataVeil?

3) Audience with mobile phone app

The witnesses, members of the public, have a mobile phone app. With their mobile phones they make contact with the participant in the DataVeil and they talk about whether they trust the invisible person behind the veil. The person behind the DataVeil can hear their voices in the headset when touching his or her veiled body.



'Tele—Trust' 2010 Banff Canada / Electrosmog
Performance – installation <http://www.lancelmaat.nl/content/teletrust-o>. Photo: Lancel/Maat

All reactions and portraits will be saved in a data base and are part of the work. The participant in the DataVeil can 'call up' voices or portraits by stroking his or her veiled body. Touching your body creates the impression that the voices are coming from inside your body; you seem to 'embody' voices of tele-present strangers. In an intimate body experience and real time audio, you share emotions and statements of trust, about the questions: Am I here with you? Who is watching who? Who is controlling who? In what identity and in whose body?

Artists as Hosts

And so we have arrived at our role as an artist.

We have taken on the role of the host, and consequently we invite the audience to be a

participant. You could compare it to a party, it is a pluriform role. The host gives the party, protects his guests and inspires them. With our ‘party’ we infiltrate the hybrid public space.²³ In this space we do a proposal for an alternative meeting space. Unlike for example a TV host, the mediation of our meeting space is not intended as a commercial product, but as an experiential proposal, research and subject of conversation. We aim to be catalysts for a sensitive awareness of this hybrid space.

We are Hybrid City Hosts.



Social spatial model of ‘Tele—Trust’ – The green figure is the Host. www.lancelmaat.nl/content/teletrust-o

Hosting the ritual

As a host we supervise the ritual, such as for example the previously described ritual ‘Tele—Trust’. We protect the vulnerable body of the participant in the public space like body guards. This way participants will feel safe and will allow themselves to be physically vulnerable and would, for example, put on an interactive DataVeil. Members of the public wear the DataVeil in dynamic and crowded city public spaces such as Taksim square in Istanbul, a Dutch shopping street, het Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, a University campus.

We are also *reflectors*. Together with the audience we reflect on the personal experience of the ritual. We are entering into a dialogue with the audience. This often leads to moving encounters. A wearer of the interactive DataVeil in Tele—Trust said to us: ‘When I touch my body, I’m together with the others, but when I hold off, I am alone.’ And a Data-

Veil wearer in Shanghai entrusted to us: ‘

I could hear your voice in my skin.

I remembered you remembering. My body is your body.’ For this networked body we are the hosts.

The participants’ reactions and experiences are recorded in a database. Their experiences will lead to the setting up of parameters for the design of alternative hybrid social systems. And for us as artists to inspiration for other new rituals.

Concluding

Let us now return to Anke Coumans’ first question: why is the role of the host an important concept for artists relating to public spaces and to their audience?

We notice that we are experiencing challenging social shifts in public spaces. Virtual and physical public spaces are interweaving into a hybrid environment. We are present in this in a hybrid way. We meet both physically and virtually, and this is the way we communicate with each other.

How do we experience trust and reciprocity in this forms of communication, in which we meet remote, telematically; and which is mediated by digitally programmed ‘personal’ devices?

Coumans writes: ‘Communication is programmatical when the receiver is expected to execute the intended programme. Communication is dialogical if it is aimed at the receiver being able to say something back.’²⁴ How can we give shape to a hybrid public space in such a way that the dialogue remains open? And what would we need for this dialogue?

Social sciences describe how body language, touching each other and looking each other in the eyes are important forms of reciprocity, with which we assess whether we can trust each other. But could you for example use telematic devices to touch each other? In order to develop a shared awareness about these questions, we are designing temporary

alternative systems for public spaces.²⁵ We invite people to reflect through interaction. This way we experiment with dialogue, touching each other and social rituals – and link these to a digital dataflow. In this lies the urgency for the artist as a host for us – Hosting the Hybrid City.

Karen Lancel and Hermen Maat create ‘meeting places’ in (semi) public spaces. These ‘meeting places’ are performances and installations, designed as seductive, visual environments. Each ‘meeting place’ or social sculpture functions as an artistic ‘social lab’ in which the artists invite their audience as co-researchers. Here the artists invite their audience to experiment and play with their especially designed deconstructed social technologies. Lancel and Maat research contemporary social systems in a mediated society. Their works are internationally shown, among others at: Ars Electronica, Linz (A); ZKM, Karlsruhe (D); De Appel, Amsterdam (NL); Transmediale, Berlin (D); Eyebeam, New

York (US); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (NL); Urban Screens 08, Melbourne (Aus); ISEA 04 (Fin); ISEA 2011 Istanbul (T) Biennale Villette Numerique, Paris (F); Art Center Nabi, Seoul (Kor); Smart Project Space, Amsterdam (NL); Millennium Art Museum, Beijing (CN); 2nd and 3rd Art @science Exhibitions & conference Beijing (CN) in 2006 and 2012; NIMK, Amsterdam (NL); World Expo 2010 - DCC Shanghai (CN); BNMI Banff Center (Ca). Lancel is currently artistic PhD candidate at Technical University of Delft: ‘Participatory Systems Initiative’ (prof dr Frances Brazier, dr Caroline Nevejan).

www.lancelmaat.nl

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2. Joseph Beuys: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Beuys.

3. Sophie Calle, artist: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophie_Calle

4. Karen Lancel and Hermen Maat, artists: www.lancelmaat.nl

5. Rirkrit Tiravaijia, artist: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rirkrit_Tiravaijia.

6. Luc Courchesne, artist. ‘Portrait One’ (1990-1995): on1.zkm.de/zkm/e/werke/PortraitOne.

7. Dan Graham, artist: ‘Performer/Audience/Mirror’ (1977) www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/performer-audience-mirror/

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11. Mushon Zer-Aviv, Transmediale Con-

ference ‘Digital Liveness – Realtime, Desire and Sociability (2011) ‘Getting Intimate with Invisible Audiences’, mushon.com/blog/2010/09/21/getting-intimate-with-invisible-audiences/

12. Manuel Castells, ‘The Rise of the Network Society’ (1996).

13. Eric Kluitenberg, “Netwerk van de golven. Leven en handelen in een hybride ruimte.” Essay in ‘Open. 11’ (2006)

14. Rob Kitchin and Martin Dodge, ‘Code/Space: Software and Everyday Life’ (2011).

15. Caroline Nevejan: *Presence and the design of trust*, PHD dissertation University of Amsterdam (2007).

16. Arjen Mulder: *Over mediatheorie. Taal, beeld, geluid, gedrag*, 2004.

17. Caroline Nevejan: *Presence and the design of trust*, PHD dissertation University of Amsterdam (2007).

18. William J. Mitchell, ME++: *The Cyborg Self and the Networked City*, 2004.

19. About the use of interactivity: “Through ‘performing the act’ you reflect on yourself, the world around you, and your relation to and your presence in that world.” Notions such as ‘(not) Having a (free) choice, control and manipulation’ become objects for research - resulting in a configuring, transforming action,

occupying a living community.’ Within this conception of interactivity we invite people to *reflect through interaction*.

20. Nina Folkersma ‘Knikkers, schelpen en kruidige zakjes’ (Lygia Clark), *Metropolis M*, no. 5, (1998) Over het Ritueel als ervaringsvoorstel: met werk van Lygia Clark / Karen Lancel en Hermen Maat / Klaar van der Lippe.

21. Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus (2007).

22. Caroline Nevejan: *Presence and the design of trust*, PHD dissertation University of Amsterdam (2007). www.being-here.net

23. Anke Coumans ‘De kunsten en het politieke’ (The arts and the political), Inauguration speech research group Image in Context of the Centre of Applied Research and Innovation Art & Society, Hanze University Groningen, Academy Minerva (2012).

24. Anke Coumans ‘De kunsten en het politieke’ (The arts and the political), Inauguration speech research group Image in Context of the Centre of Applied Research and Innovation Art & Society, Hanze University Groningen, Academy Minerva (2012).

25. Katia Truijten, ‘Urban Social Spaces – An Essay’ (2013) katiatruijten.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/truijten-final-es-say-nmt.pdf.

THE ARTIST AS HOST: ON THEORIES AND INTERACTIVE NETWORKED MUSHROOMS

Anke Coumans, professor of the research group Image in Context, asked me to develop an educational research module based on the question of possibilities for the concept of 'the host' for the artist's professional practice. We conceived the idea for this particular occasion of comparing two approaches based on an existing teaching structure: an interactive media class 'interactive media' and a theme class.

About the workshop and the works of art

'The artist as a host'. The idea was immediately clear. Think of a party, think of a funeral. A host invites his or her audience to become a participant. We were able to start immediately with the questions that went with this: How, within the arts, can you think about the audience as a participant? Which positions do artists take up as hosts? What does 'reflection through interaction' mean? What is 'interactive' when there's a participant involved? Can an interactive work of art be autonomous? And is it possible to NOT participate? During the first weeks an explosion of ideas erupted, and a wealth of live artist roles and positions were discussed.

In the theme class essays were written about this. In order to obtain insight into the various ways in which you can think about the artist and the audience, together we chose to put a historic example (1960-1980) next to an example no older than three years. A prerequisite was that in these works of art, the artist him or herself was part of the work. This way we compared the various positions of artists and works of art. As a working method some students put the emphasis on the duration and on the location and context in which the work took place and the way the audience participated. Others put a central focus on the role of the artist, the body and the artist's personal invitation to his or her audience.

Some students based their own (concept for a) work of art on this. The essays and artworks show a wonderful exploration of art which, without taking the 'boundaries' of the media into consideration, goes in search of an experience, a reflection and an image.

In the interactive media class I put the assignment into different words. This because of the objective of this interactive media class: obtaining specific knowledge about creating 'Interactive Media' art works. Based on this approach art becomes interdisciplinary. The threshold to start working with the software and hardware is low for the students, also because of the supervision of artist Josien Niebuur and her very well-equipped studio.

These days the possibilities to create a work of art with software and hardware seem limitless. In this trans-medial and multi-medial world the artist can no longer possess all disciplines himself and therefore also has to be trained to be a manager and contractor. The artist has to understand which knowledge he needs to be able to supervise assignments; and with which knowledge he himself can carry out the technical part of an artwork. All artists make therefore an 'interaction design' which is understandable for both technicians and the general public. This way the artist can realize the art work.

'Interaction design' is a term which has different meanings in different disciplines: in web design for example it means 'the flow of actions on a website'. For an interactive work of art the artist is not restricted to a website or a screen; he or she can use all means and media. The world is at your feet. How do you make a vast territory that is so unlimited, your own?

In this interactive media class students learn about making art as well as about programming and the use of electronics. In addition they got their hands dirty for, for example, while making interactive networked polyester mushrooms.

During the process of these workshops I was surprised by the wide range of experiments and of the development of knowledge. The next pages show both the above mentioned methods used by the students to research 'the artist as a host'. Together they form a fascinating combination of research texts and works of art.

THEME CLASS CONTRIBUTIONS:

Anna Weyer (Germany)

Chan Lai Kuen (Malaysia)

Katrina Jongsma (Canada)

Rosemarie Pringle (Germany)

Angie Daniels (South Africa/Germany)

Niya Konstantinova (Bulgaria)

Gothards Prieditis (Latvia)

Ruben Jager (Netherlands)

THEME CLASS CONTRIBUTIONS

In the theme class essays were written to compare a historic example of the artist as a host (1960-1980) with an example no older than three years. A prerequisite was that in these works of art, the artist him or herself was part of the work. This research was the point of departure to develop a concept for an art work.

ANNA WEYER

Anna Weyer (Germany) researched more extreme forms of participation; by the example performances she discusses how you are immersed in the pivotal point of the work, it is almost beyond participation! It shows how playing with fear is a communication strategy at the same time.

Comparing VALIE EXPORT: Tapp- und Tastkino with MARLENE HARING: Show Me Yours, And I'll Show You Mine.

In 1968 Valie Export stepped out into the street with a mission: to make people aware, to criticize, to be subversive. Her medium: her own body. In her work entitled „Tapp- und Tastkino“ (Tap and Touch Cinema), Export was out on the street in Munich with a box strapped in front of her bare chest. The front of the box was closed by a small scale theatre curtain. She proceeded to invite the public in the street to come and touch her breast which could be felt, but not seen. While touching her chest, she continuously looked the participant in the eye. The whole action was recorded on film. In this performance she invited the public to make an experience, to learn and to be aware. She was the initiator, but also the host, not only to her work but also to her body. She used her body, detached from her own feelings about it, to be a surface of experience and went a step further than the common notion about body-art in the 60's.

She openly invited the public to approach her and, though initially staying very distant, made a connection with the participant

through eye contact. The participant got involved with the work not only through a mental connection but also through touch, feel, and eye contact.

Export's point was to have the audience not stay at a distance but to get as involved in what she was trying to do, which could not be accomplished with the mere explanation of her point. To truly understand what Export was aiming at, the audience had to experience it through someone schooled in her point of view, which ultimately was she herself. By having another person host the event it would never have been possible to establish the certain connection that she made by holding eye contact, while at the same time not saying a word, nor would it be possible to transfer the feeling that this piece tried to get through. Valie Export hosted both the piece and her body, mind and the meaning of the work.

MARLENE HARING: Show Me Yours, And I'll Show You Mine

In the performance entitled „Show Me Yours, And I'll Show You Mine“, Austrian artist Marlene Haring invited the audience into a mirror-covered box with two doors, guaranteeing absolute privacy for two people to come inside and pull their pants down. The performance took place at the Centre of Contemporary Art in Torun from May 18th to September 26th 2012.

Haring's body was the central focus of her work, while the box in which it took place was merely a prop. Without her presence the piece couldn't exist, as it would be lacking the input of the host. It could not consist of four walls without the presence of the artist. By the act of hosting the piece, Haring added meaning to it. Haring referred to the body-art of the 60's and 70's while adding a contemporary understanding of art through her playfulness. She referred to the well known children's game of "show me yours and I'll show you mine" but took it to a completely different level by transferring it to a grown

up context in a contemporary art exhibition and putting it in the spotlight. The participant was reminded of a playful experience of his or her childhood with a level of seriousness that it implies in this context added to that. In the absurdity of the childhood connection and the placement of the piece Haring chose, a certain uneasiness and even surrealism was created. The participant had to choose for him or herself how to deal with it; whether to behave in a way which was like the childhood experiences and memories or in a conscious, contemporary way. Haring tackled the whole over-sexualisation of society by referring to a game well-known by all of us and by distancing image from action. With all pornography available to everyone today, it is quite a different thing to make the choice of showing your own private parts to a complete stranger and for you to be confronted with the private parts of a complete stranger. A click on a website may be easy and efficient enough, and in this experiment you also have the naked and exposed genitalia of a stranger in front of you in a second. But in both situations these genitalia are out of reach. By using their own body the audience and the participant are led from an initial laugh to a specific reflection about their own bodies. Image and perception in this performance create a conflict. The audiences' presumptions about 'image' and 'experience' and the real-time make for a unique experience. It is like nothing they've ever been through before.

About BOTH WORKS:

To receive you have to sacrifice. To expose the participant you have to expose yourself. Private action in a public environment. Intimate action becomes strange, distanced and awkward. The created friction is a strategy to present our own habits.

CHAN LAI KUEN

Chan Lai Kuen (Malaysia) researched her own presence in a public space. By re-enacting performances of Marc Bijl she was able to research what really happens, and develop a new strategy for a new artwork. By 'trying to be something I am not' she wore a niqab for a week to test the social reactions and take a step into the research to come to the performance 'Security - Insecurity'. She really showed courage by acting, reflecting and taking the next step. This way she developed a work method which gave her control of the process.

By Chan Lai Kuen The artist as a host - Audience / participants

Work nr. 1: Rhythm o (1974) by Marina Abramovic

72 objects were placed on a table and the audience was invited to apply these onto the artist's body in whatever way they wished, while the artist stood there for six hours. Rose petals, lipsticks, a knife, a whip, a gun and a bullet were some of the objects. The artist was present as the main subject (and as the host as well) to lure the audience into participation. The audience notably became more aggressive and violent as the work progressed. They began to see artist as an "object", and gained more and more control of the situation as time went by.

Work nr. 2: Please Empty Your Pockets (2010) by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

The work 'Please Empty Your Pockets' (2010) by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer was an installation with a conveyor belt and a computerized scanner. It scanned small objects and

projected the images of all the objects on the conveyer belt. The conveyer belt passed them through the scanner which accumulated scanned-images of all the objects it scanned. The audience participated in the work by placing small objects on the scanner. The objects came from the pockets of the audience which showed a certain level of privacy.

**Work nr. 3: In Search of Suspicious,
2003 by Marc Bijl**

The work 'In Search of Suspicious' had fake security guards standing at the entrance of the Berlin subway asking people to walk through a metal detector while checking their baggage and identification papers.

This essay researches how artists use the their role in host situations in a space where an audience is able to participate. This in order to alter the outcome co-operatively as the work progresses. I chose the work 'Rhythm o; by Marina Abramovic, 'Please Empty Your Pockets' by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer and 'In Search of Suspicious', 2003 by Marc Bijl. I like the different approaches of the artists

and the way they play with everyday objects. Marina Abramovic deliberately did not control the situation. This way she created conditions in which the audience could behave or misbehave - until it almost got out of control. The work is exciting and has many layers of meaning. In 'Rhythm o' Marina Abramovic created a 'game' which allowed the audience to participate in a very open way. Hundreds of thousands of different outcomes could have occurred. In this work violent acts from the audience were prevented. She put the audience in control. Even the artist's life was in the hands of the audience. Because of this a high level of intimacy was created. The interaction between the artist and the audience became very sensitive. Rafael Lozano Hemmer controlled the whole interactive process quite exactly and mimicked a customs conveyor belt. In the work 'Please Empty Your Pockets' the audience had absolutely no control over the game, all they could do was modify the outcome of the image on the conveyor belt by lending out their items for a brief moment. By contributing the objects which they had on their body,





Security Insecurity

the work presented as a sudden intrusion of privacy while at the same time the artist/host had full control of a number of interactions which were created in this piece.

Mark Bijl's 'In Search of Suspicious' played with a similar concept. He confronted people with a fictitious situation which looked and felt like a real security check. And asked people to ask themselves how much of control of their lives they really possess. All these artists challenge the social and political normality in society, and this is very fascinating to me.

The Strategies for my own work based on the work of Marc Bijl

In the first test work I was playing around with the ideas of undersize and oversize, innocence and authority, controlling and manipulation.

I dressed up in a security-officer's outfit with a self-made 'security' tag placed in front of the main entrance of Groningen University to try and stop people and make them show me their identity cards.

I was standing in front of the entrance of the university, and I didn't feel comfortable. I was supposed to ask people to show me their

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ID before they entered the building. I wanted to know how willing people were to show who they are by whatever kind of ID they possess to enter a building. I didn't manage to do that. I felt guilty while these people entered the building, especially the elderly people who were probably wearing their nicest clothes to attend their children's graduation ceremony. This was supposed to be the best day for me to carry out my test work as there was a graduation function going on at the moment; a lot of visitors were going in and out of the building. But I couldn't do it. People, in particular people who were unfamiliar with the environment, stopped in front of me and informed me where they were heading to. I nodded to them and gestured for them to proceed. Those who probably entered the building every day looked at me feeling weird but did not ask any question, just ignored me and went straight into the university. And then I announced my failure to Nia and Rosemarie. I surrendered. I felt really uncomfortable and constantly confronted by my own guilt. We did our test in front of the Groninger Museum afterwards, because Rosemarie started to ask a guy to show his ID, I had to do the same while another elderly couple tried to pass by us. They stopped, obviously surprised and irritated by my request, while they were looking for their ID in their bag. They requested to see my manager, after a few questions thrown at me. I failed to satisfy them, and as I was aware of my inability to converse in Dutch, I also showed them my ID. "If you can't show me your ID how can we show you our ID? Then anyone could have asked me for an ID!" Exactly! That's my point! I almost screamed at her ecstatically. Finally we let them cross the bridge to the museum and we decided to end our test and run away. While running, I heard an angry shout behind me. The woman whom I stopped and tested for five minutes stuck up her middle finger at me angrily.

I was puzzled. I questioned myself: what the fuck am I doing? I felt like I was playing a prank on those poor people. Looked like that was a mutual feeling to both parties. I didn't manage to open up a dialogue. I didn't manage to make people think. What is the role of artist and what is art? In Mark Bijl's 'In Search of Suspicious', people were willing to submit themselves and cave in, because they were very convincing. They were so convincing that almost all people saw it as reality. But what is reality? Isn't it constructed by human beings? Isn't society built by human beings for human beings?

"Is everything that is weird art to you?" my friend once asked me. I couldn't actually answer him. But art shouldn't be normal. What is normal then? There is nothing that is normal in this world, no one is normal. What is normal? How can you define normal?

Second phase of the test work: 'Can I be something that I'm not?'

Do objects you have on you define who you are? What defines the identity of a person in society? Can a piece of identity paper really tell people who you are? Can the objects and the things that someone owns tell something about the personality of the person, or who they are? What fascinates me in these four examples of work is how people are linked together by objects. How a particular object such as the niqab defines one person. A stereotype immediately surfaces at the sight of what a person who wears a niqab is like. This work also started from a question: 'Do I have the freedom to wear whatever I like without being put at risk?' I tried to examine my own freedom and identity.

'Can I be something that I'm not?' –Cindy

Ironically, when this performance ended, it felt like I regained my freedom. It started from freedom and ended with my freedom.

Third phase of the test work 'Security Insecurity'

Outside the entrance of a bankrupt discotheque in Groningen, I put a table with two badges on it. I dressed up as a security guard. People passing by were asked to choose a tag out of the two options: Security or Insecurity. Then I interviewed them about why they chose this badge.

With this work I tried to explore the feelings of people who are living in this city regarding these two specific states of mind. Did the feeling of insecurity evolve out of the absence of security? Or do these two states of mind complement each other? Do these states of mind interchange all the time during a person's lifetime? These questions sound really big but they are exactly the questions that interest me the most. By asking my audience how they interpreted being questioned about the words Security and Insecurity, they made a random choice, told a story and I took their picture.

Chan Lai Kuen

KATRINA JONGSMA

Katrina Jongsma (Canada) put into practice how knowledge of (mis)using words in a serious or humorous manner can change our behaviour and our experience in a public space.

Theme class Katrina Jongsma Art in society/context Loesje vs Jenny Holzer 'Cardboard me'

Art plays an important role in society. It can be used as a method to project an artist's opinion on certain events which are happening around them. It can be used as method of critique, support, and reflection to raise awareness to many different people. In this essay I will be discussing the works of Loesje and Jenny Holzer.

Loesje is the name of a fictional girl who signs posters and postcards with critical and humorous texts and which are put in a public space. It started in Arnhem and the posters were only seen there. Slowly these texts began to spread to other places in the Netherlands. Loesje was founded in 1983 and went international in 1989. Loesje is a group of people from around the world who wanted to make the world a more positive and creative place. It is an international organisation in favour of free speech. Its goal is to spread creativity, positive criticism, ideas, philosophical ponderings and thoughts about current events by way of using short slogans on posters. These posters are black and white. An example of a Loesje is, 'The world is too round to sit silently in the corner.'

Jenny Holzer is an American conceptual artist who lives and works in New York. Her truisms are among her most popular works. These truisms are 'truths' which lie at the boundary of truth and our perception of truth. She places her truisms in public spaces, and as a fixture in a public space they are a contrast to the advertising, product marketing and mass media around us. Holzer inserts her work into the real world to criticise and analyse the world around us, connecting with the cultural, economical and political conditions. These truisms are a work of art that have been seen by more members of the general public than the work

of any other living artist. The truisms reach a wide audience and offer criticism, they open people's eyes to the world around them, people who otherwise might not be exposed to art, and make us more conscious of the human condition by revealing our faults and frailties.

Truisms from 1977-1979 were posters with these sayings printed on them. They were hung anonymously all over New York. Holzer simplified the sayings so that people could understand. They inspired pedestrians to scribble messages on them and to comment on what the posters said. An example is the truism 'Protect me from what I want' which was put on an electronic billboard in New York's Times Square.

Jenny Holzer and Loesje's works are very similar. They both use posters with sayings to reach the public, openly criticising and 'discussing' things that are taking place in the world now. Jenny Holzer's work tends to be more dark, whereas Loesje's work is more light and humorous. Nowadays everyone can contribute to Loesje and add their own ideas. Jenny Holzer also used an online system to generate truisms through the internet. The text is the work of art, together with its context, and this triggers a reaction in the public space. These types of work are really generated for public spaces and open the eyes of the viewer to things around them which earlier they might never have considered.

'Cardboard me'

What I learned from researching the artist as a host in the context of society, is knowledge of how using words in a serious or humorous manner can provide insights and criticism on different subjects.

What I did was make a cardboard cut-out of myself, dressed in my own clothes and with a photo of my face as the head, so that it was clear it was me. In my hand I had a





sign which said “Ik ben hier niet, maar jullie zijn toch welkom.” (‘I’m not here, but you’re welcome anyway’) About once a month I am a ‘greeter’ at the church where I go, welcoming the people as they go inside. That particular Sunday afternoon I was not able to go to church so I set up the cardboard cut-out with the sign in the entrance instead. It was met with a positive reaction, and I received a lot of commentary about it. It shows that in church when you are not there you are still missed and people asked where I was. To research and play with context I also set it up at Albert Heijn supermarket, the difference being that no one there knows me. The cut-out was considered odd; it does not matter to people if I am there or not. Whereas at church it does matter to other members of the congregation if you are there or not. The idea of a ‘greeter’ at Albert Heijn is a bit strange, so it gets looked at as being odd, but it does not cause a big reaction. Perhaps it makes people think of what a community is, and of how alienated we are...

ROSEMARIE PRINGLE

Rosemarie Pringle (Germany) had the courage to do experiments in a public space and translated her experiences into a 'Control Membrane'. It will be provided here with safety and new forms of contact.

'Control-Membrane'

The artist as a host: Comparing Yoko Ono's 'Cut piece' and Marina Abramovic's 'The artist is present' concerning the aspect of how the audience participates. Leading to my own artwork proposal: 'Control-Membrane'. In dealing with the concept 'The artist as a Host' I found out that it gives an answer to the question which role the artist can play in the creation process of an artwork and in the stage of carrying out the artwork in the public. Furthermore it evokes the question what other roles an artist can have in communicating his or her work.

The artist who sees himself in the role of a host and who finds himself in the planning phase, can on the one hand design some pre-sets of the basic requirements, making a plan for the whole artwork, exploring all the different aspects the work involves. Or, on the other hand, he can set the basic rules of the game and see what happens. I compare it to a dinner party where you invite some people to come to your house. You can decide about what food you want to prepare, what effect it should have on the visitors and about the setting of the table. How open and freely the setting will be designed lies in the hands of the artist. The artist can hand the audience a tool, or something to look at, give them

something to build, a line to walk, a piece of paper to write on, a tattoo. The possibilities are endless and in general the work does not necessarily have to involve that the audience participate actively.

I investigated 'the artist as a host' of a spectacle where the audience participates freely and is involved in designing the process and the outcome of the artwork. I chose this theme because it leaves many possibilities open for spontaneous exchange during the performance between the audience and the artist which I admire and fear at the same time.

In her performance art piece, first performed in 1964 at the Sogetsu Art Center in Tokyo, Yoko Ono walks onto the stage wearing a dress. She casually kneels down and invites the audience to come onto the stage and cut away pieces of her dress. The audience doubtfully starts cutting her dress and in the continuing performance becomes more and more shameless and without hesitating they cut bigger pieces.

Yoko Ono's Cut piece first performed 1964 at the Sogetsu Art Center Tokyo

The second performance art piece I chose is by Marina Abramovic and is called "The artist is present." During her three month exhibition at the MOMA (March 14 – May 31, 2010) Abramovic sat on a chair from when the museum opened in the morning until the closing hour. During this whole period her exhibition was shown in the museum. She did not talk, eat or go to the toilet. In front of her was a free chair which was seen as an invitation for the audience to sit opposite her.

Marina Abramovic 'The artist is present', MOMA 2010

In both performances the audience plays an active role, but it is more obvious in Yoko Ono's 'Cut piece' which is mainly aimed at testing the limits of the visitors, whereas Marina Abramovic's performance shows her

exploring her own limits. Yoko Ono's 'Cut Piece' is a very direct invitation and the audience plays a big role. The performance raises questions about morals and manners, it tests where the boundaries are between privacy and public life. The participants reveal that there is a will to violate personal boundaries. In fact they cut away all of Yoko's dress. It becomes a power play between the participant and the artist. My first impression was that Yoko Ono showed her own vulnerability, she presented herself in the role of a victim and offered the audience the opportunity to violate her privacy and to be disrespectful to her. However, because she did it voluntarily and did not show any inner trouble or anger she was not really a victim. I see now that Yoko Ono was the one who had total control over herself and the situation; the party who lost control is the audience. Yoko is like a mirror that reflects the audience's disrespectful behaviour back to them. Speaking of control: Marina Abramovic shows an astonishing amount of self control in her performances. In 'The artist is present' she took her body as her only medium, the only subject she presented to her audience was her body, similar to Yoko Ono's performance, in which she also gave her body voluntarily to the audience and almost objectified herself. Marina Abramovic made the boundaries more clear; she set the audience a limit. Nobody was allowed to touch her and she gave herself restrictions which made her explore her physical and mental boundaries.

Both artworks are an invitation for the audience to participate in a performance; and thus to be confronted with the world of the artist, related to their own world.

Research for my performance

To develop my idea I started with an experiment. I went to a public space and tried to start a conversation with a person I chose randomly, asking a personal question. People reacted very differently. With some



I had no conversation at all and with others a brief talk and with one person a long conversation. A partner and me considered how personal the conversation was, or how willingly the person was to let me enter into his or her private sphere. As a conclusion we drew a circle on the pavement which represented the privacy of the conversation; the more private the talk the bigger the circle, symbolizing the boundaries of the conversation.

Concept for my performance installation ‘Control-Membrane’

Continue from that research I am going to do another experiment: I’m going to construct a membrane which surrounds me like my personal private sphere and which acts as my shield. At the same time it must in some way let messages from the audience come through and thus reflect their own behaviour.

ANGIE DANIELS

Angie Daniels (South Africa/Germany) is going to make a table with edible art: ‘Most artworks are not meant to be touched. This one is meant to be destroyed, consumed, torn apart and devoured.’ The work is a amalgam of the inspiration of four artists she analyses.

Angie Daniels research: Allan Kaprow and El Bulli’s Ferran Adrià

For ‘invitation/seduction’ it took a lot of research to find suitable artists and artworks to fit the theme. An actual invitation artwork, where the audience receives an invitation to participate in an experience, was difficult to locate. Alan Kaprow, as the pioneer and developer of ‘Happenings’ inspired me, as he caused complicated and wildly interesting events to happen, often without a set plan. His audience became, in essence, the scriptwriters and participants simultaneously.

For my second artist I first struggled to accept a meal at a restaurant as an artwork. However, I soon realised that it is indeed a work of art, as there is an intense amount of hard work and extreme creativity involved in Ferran Adrià’s dishes, as well as irony. Ferran Adrià in his restaurant El Bulli uses his dishes to provoke and surprise his guests. This requires so much devotion and detail that the restaurant was closed for six months every year merely to focus on creating new edible works of art. In the end, he is one of the best examples of a host in the literal and artistic sense. And of course, his dishes are incredibly beautiful.

Allan Kaprow (1927–2006) was an artist who developed the term and theory of ‘Happenings’, audience-participation works that depend on the viewer in order to make them a part of the art, which he described in his own words as ‘a game, an adventure, a number of activities engaged in by participants for the sake of playing’.

‘Household’ took place on 3 May 1964 on a landfill outside Ithaca, NY as part of the festival of Contemporary Art. It was the culmination of a row of Happenings revolving around architecture in the sense that the participants were involved in the construction and destruction of dwellings and territorial boundaries. As author and participant, Kaprow had no set plan; he merely suggested a ritualized battle of the sexes involving a group of men who would build a ‘tower’ and the woman a ‘nest’, while a third group would function as a choir. A plan was unnecessary as the resulting form would be a product of collective decisions and available materials. The title referred to the daily activities in life and the figurative sense of defending a household; it became the site of daily existential drama of building and tearing down standards, touching on a broadband of topics of the time, such as the problem of sexual liberation in the 1960s, as well as the critical addressing of the modern lifestyle and consumerism. Kaprow’s work attempts to integrate art and life, blurring the separation between life, art, artist, and audience. Kaprow: ‘Life is much more interesting than art. The line between art and life should be kept as fluid, and perhaps indistinct, as possible.’

Often called the greatest restaurant on earth, el Bulli received 2,000,000 requests a year. Of these requests only 8,000 guests obtained a reservation. The restaurant’s creative genius Ferran Adrià revolutionized cooking by deconstructing dishes so that eating at el Bulli became a full body sensory experience, challenging sight, touch, smell,

taste, memory and assumptions about what food is and can be. What you see may not be what you think you are eating. It is a fusion between a haute cuisine restaurant, a science lab, and an art gallery. Bewildering diners as they are invited to decipher flavours, question assumptions and experience new possibilities throughout the meal, which typically has over thirty courses. Adrià’s philosophy is to provide unexpected contrasts of flavour, temperature and texture. Nothing is what it seems. When presented with a dish, the senses always fail to initially predict the outcome as it significantly contrasts previous knowledge and experience. Adrià states that the act of eating engages all the senses as well as the mind, therefore preparing and serving food could well be the most complex and comprehensive of the performing arts.

‘Cooking involves everything, whatever discipline you like. For example, it is health, economics, psychology, science, design, and artistic expression. It’s a very versatile discipline.’

- Ferran Adrià

Concept for edible art

My work is inspired not only by Alan Kaprow and Ferran Adrià, but also by two other artists: Yayoi Kusama and Rirkrit Travanja.

Yayoi Kusama, through utilizing the visual hallucinations she suffered her entire life, created beauty by forming infinite spaces of dots which, she states, consume the entire universe. Rirkrit Tiravanija hosted gallery shows by serving food instead of hanging art, filling the space nonetheless, as his art was about bringing people together.

In the spirit of these wonderful pieces I have allowed myself to become inspired by these artists and intend to create an edible artwork consisting of a ‘painting’ of dots formed by round foods, for example sushi in its regular appearance and in altered forms by the addition of various food colourings. After creating a vividly coloured pattern, bearing some resemblance to the dotted paintings of

Yayoi Kusama, I invite my audience to become participants by consuming, and thus destroying my artwork. A fitting quote to this situation is:

'They are not just looking at the spectacle, they are part of the spectacle.' - Marina Abramovic

The intention is to challenge the participant to overcome their sense of what visual appearance food should normally have, as opposed to the unaltered flavour of said food. If it is blue, will it taste the way we expect? Or will our brains tell us that it not only looks different, but it tastes different as well? Scientific studies have shown that the colour of the glass in which a drink is served has the ability to alter the taste. For example, drinks served in yellow and red containers were perceived by test subjects as being hotter than the same drinks served in blue and green containers. Other studies have shown that the colour of the drink itself influenced its taste; green, for example, is said to taste sweeter.

Most artworks are not meant to be touched. This one is meant to be destroyed, consumed, torn apart and devoured. In Kaprow's piece, I admire that the audience was invited to reign free by first creating structures and then destroying them completely. My favourite image, and the one I used in the essay was the final outcome of the situation, where the audience ignited the work and sat watching it burn. In this sense, I am combining the inspirations given to me by all four artists.

NIYA KONSTANTINOVA

Niya Konstantinova (Bulgaria) researched the way we experience space and time. As she said: 'This research for me was a trip into the boundless world of possibilities which art gives you.'

Theme class 'self-objectivity'

Niya Konstantinova on Dan Graham and Elena Cologni

-Audience participants-

What we think is true is quite subjective. The world is that colourful because every one of us has his own view of the world. Dan Graham and Elena Cologni are the two artists I found very inspiring. I will compare the two art works, one from the 70's, Dan Graham's 'Performer/Audience/Mirror' of 1975, and Elena Cologni's 'SPA(E)CIOUS', part of the project 'Rockfluid' of 2011. Both artists are researching the social aspects of human behaviour, presenting the connection between perception and memory, referring to the fragile character of recollection and representation of reality.

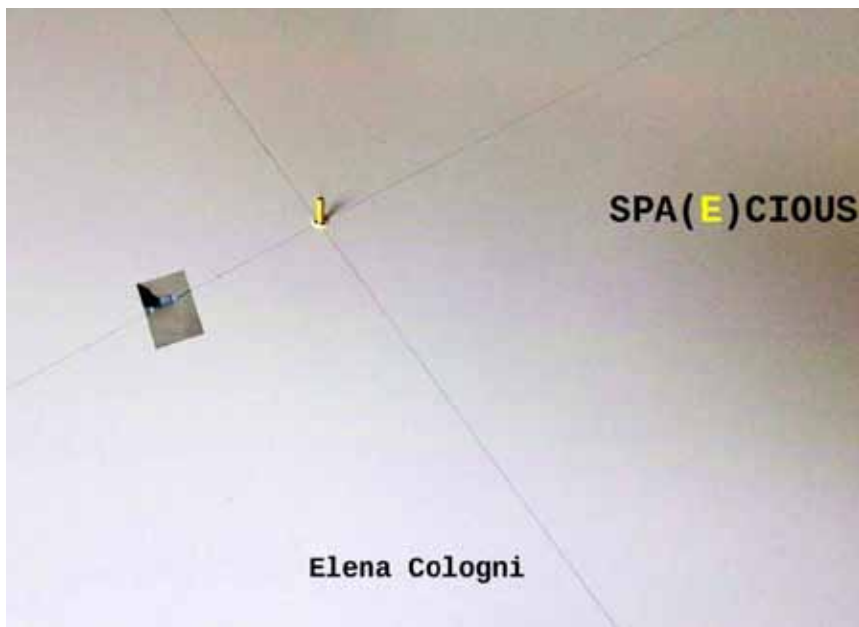
I am part of the group 'Audience participants', so for me is important to research these artworks based on their design and the way the artist has a role as a host. What is the role of the audience? What does the audience experience when participating? An artwork that requires interaction between an artist and his audience needs a specific design in which the public could be involved, researched, manipulated. Dan Graham's performance 'Performer/Audience/Mirror' takes place in a small room.

The audience sits on the floor, facing the artist. Behind him is a mirror giving him an overview of the public. In this performance the artist is the leader. Dan Graham confronts his public directly, in order to question their perception of present and recent past.

Elena Cologni does the same but in a different way. The audience is transformed into participants by playing a game designed by the artist. They need to form a polygon shape with a rope together; every participant acts as a corner. The players explore the polygon-form by changing places. Afterwards are asked to make a drawing of the shape. In this way the artist questions the subjectivity of different points of views concerning shared moments in the recent past. Elena Cologni hosts every performance. Even though she sets the rules, she is closer to the audience than Dan Graham. This is the result of how the artist treats the audience. In 'Performer/Audience/Mirror' the public is represented as a mass, a unity which is part of the performance. This unity is silent. It is under the examination of the performer. The participants from 'SPA(E)CIOUS' are equal to the artist. They cooperate with each other in order to create the artwork.

Both artists have the same goal to reach the point where the audience starts questioning their 'self-objectivity'. The artworks lead to this point through different experiences. 'Performer/Audience/Mirror' gives the audience the opportunity to perceive itself instantly as a public mass, while the performers' comments are slightly delayed. First one person from the audience sees himself 'objectively/subjectively', perceived by himself; next he hears himself described 'objectively/subjectively' through the performer's perception.

A participant from 'SPA(E)CIOUS' can experience his body in time and space. To enhance the ability of memorising a moment in the past, the participant translates the movement of the body into a drawing. By doing so the participant is able to compare his perception of a certain situation to the perception of the others, with whom he shared the moment. In this research it was important to find artworks in which the audience became an inseparable part of the work. To investigate how different artists were managing to integrate their audiences and create new works together. For me this research was a trip into the boundless world of possibilities that art gives you.



GOTHARDS PRIEDITIS

Gothards Prieditis (Latvia) DigitalStalker. What if the love for someone becomes too obsessive. How does that change your safety? By comparing the work of Sophie Calle with the StalkShow by Lancel and Maat he developed a plan for a voluntary 'EmailStalker'.

Theme class Gothards Prieditis EmailStalker researching Sophie Calle's 'the Shadow' with Lancel and Maat's Stalkshow

Stalking is a term commonly used to refer to unwanted or obsessive attention by an individual or a group towards another person. The word stalking is used, with different meanings, in psychology and psychiatry and also as a legal term for a criminal offense.

There are not many safe spaces nowadays, most of the public places can't give you any privacy. Perhaps you can feel safe at home, but nowadays you can be stalked through the internet, people can see whether you are online. Stalking in a networked society is different, you cannot be 'invisible' anymore, or go offline. Today, stalking someone in Groningen from a distance like Kiev is possible, and it is happening to me. The stalker can see you visiting certain web-pages. Although going online is largely your own decision, if you don't feel safe with it don't do it. My own experience with a stalker at the moment is networked, because the stalker lives 2000 km away, but still she's able to stalk me, by sending me emails through an email address that I cannot easily change. This goes on, although I have her blocked in

the web pages I use. She is still able, with the help of experts, to gather information about me. That really annoys me. Because of that, I never share any information that could be useful for her. I'm not the kind of person that shares information on the internet anyway.

Sophie Calle 'The Shadow' (1981)

'In April 1981, at my request, my mother went to a detective agency. She hired them to follow me, to report my daily activities, and to provide photographic evidence of my existence.' (Sophie Calle. Double Game. With the Participation of Paul Auster, London 1999). In 'The Shadow' she sets the detective's photographic account against her own observations: the observer becomes the observed. The viewer is the third witness. This search for her own identity fails to reveal a clear picture of her, too. Sophie Calle's face does not appear in any of the pictures: her figure emerges like a shadow throughout the detective's photographs.

Karen Lancel, Hermen Maat 'StalkShow' (2003-2011)

A performer carries a backpack, containing a laptop with a touch screen. It is a portable billboard, to which a webcam has been attached. The webcam records the face of the user of the touch screen. Individual audience members are invited to touch the screen and navigate through an archive of statements about the threat of insecurity and isolation. By webcam and wireless connection, the live video portrait appears behind the statements on a large projection screen in the same public space.

The user sees himself 'watching' through a text-window. He 'watches' through a visual, technically created, social-psychological frame of mind which seems to have a life of its own. Other people's statements are linked to his personally rendered image: statements about insecurity and isolation that do not



StalkShow Lancel & Maat Moscow, 2006

seem controllable. An ‘observing’ face gazes down on the observing audience.’

The concepts of both works were quite different. It was, in Calle’s words, an attempt ‘to provide photographic evidence of my own existence.’ ‘The stranger’ is a very interesting performance work. Calle proceeded to lead the unwitting detective around parts of Paris that were particularly important for her, thereby reversing the expected position of the observed subject. Aware of her follower, she also wrote about him in frequent journal entries throughout the day. In *The Shadow* the private detective had no idea he

was part of an artwork. The idea of making the observer, the stalker, actually the one that is going to be observed without him knowing it. In the work there are no face images of the artist, but what we can see, is everything that the stalker has seen. The work really puts us in the place of the viewer. It’s like being there, stalking her.

The work of Karen Lancel and Hermen Maat is quite different from the work of Sophie Calle, by the use of new media itself. The “StalkShow” is much more modern in the technology it uses and in its concept. The

people that are being “stalked” here are in a some way in control, because it was their own decision to participate in this work. People in the StalkShow are immediately put in a kind of uncomfortable situation because their images appear in a public space with a quote on it. The people have to consciously interact with the work by using the touch screen. The texts on the participants’ faces are about invisible thoughts of being stalked. For Hermen and Karen it is about inviting and presenting invisible thoughts of people living in an isolated way. They made these statements to be presented in a public space ‘personal strategies to deal with social spaces’.

EmailStalker

For my art work I want to visualize the amount of texts that my stalker sends me. I want to make an email format that stalks you voluntarily, with love letters that present a borderline syndrome through emails.

RUBEN JAGER

Ruben Jager (Netherlands) researched how distance to the performer is experienced in the seventies and nowadays through the Internet: can an action make you feel more close to the artist?

Theme class Research by Ruben Jager comparison of the 1972 piece “Seedbed” by Vito Acconci to “Domestic Tension” from 2007, by Wafaa Bilal.

I will be writing about the concept of the artist as a “Host” through his or her art, and specifically, the artist as a “Host” in a situation where there is a form of physical interaction within the piece between audience and artist. The hosting artist in such a work introduces the viewers to a situation in which they are confronted with something new, or to experience something in a different way. As such, the artist can easily become an object inherent to the work, or one of the people who is undergoing the work. In this short essay I will compare the 1972 piece “Seedbed” by Vito Acconci to “Domestic Tension” from 2007, by Wafaa Bilal.

Seedbed is a well-remembered piece from the 70’s, which, not unlike other performance art pieces of significance from the same era, addressed the sexual taboo. Vito Acconci, the artist, had a room in which he constructed a ramp. This ramp covered most of the surface of the room, and went upwards from the ground at the entrance towards the back of the room. The viewer of the piece could walk over the ramp, while underneath, Vito

Acconci was lying, out of sight, masturbating. While doing this, he would mutter things like: “press your cunt on my face”, which would be audible through speakers in the room. He did this for three weeks, eight hours per day. The audience was present in a private situation, and experienced a sense of awkwardness and intrusion when walking over this ramp, listening in on a person’s sexuality. The artist himself used the audience as a sexual stimulant, receiving pleasure from the fact that he was the unseen, yet dominantly present voyeur, or more accurately, attendant.

Domestic Tension is a contemporary piece, made by Iraqi Wafaa Bilal. He locked himself up for 30 days in a room in which was installed a remotely controlled paint-ball gun. On a website, viewers of the piece at home could take control of the paint-ball gun and fire at Wafaa Bilal. He wanted to engage people who usually do not devote any attention to art, by creating a situation similar to an FPS, a first-person shooter game, in which, just like in many first-person shooters, people could shoot an Iraqi. Bilal underwent these shots, around sixty-thousand of them, almost as a form of martyrdom. The viewers themselves got to experience the physical sense of actually shooting someone, and not just someone, but an Iraqi.

Seedbed and Domestic Tension both involve the artist as well as the audience as being subjected to a physical experience which can be allowed through a thin barrier that exists between these two parties. In seedbed, the viewer and the artist cannot see each other, while they still have an interaction through sound and suggestion. In Domestic Tension the artist is submitted to the attacks of the viewer, and the viewer is submitted to the invitation of attack. In this case, artist and viewer are separated by the digital platform.

The emotional distance allows for a closeness, and allows the viewer to engage in something that most people would normally be anxious about, like being in the same room with a masturbating old pervert, or shooting an Iraqi guy you don’t know personally in the face. This is because the aforementioned pieces grant the viewers anonymousness, and the comfort of knowing that they were invited to the situation.

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INTERACTIVE MEDIA CLASS

CONTRIBUTIONS:

Helena Van Zuylen (Netherlands)

Suzanne Vellema (Netherlands)

Vanina Tsvetkova (Bulgaria)

Jorine Homan (Netherlands)

Cindy Wegner (Germany)

Lotte Middendorp (Netherlands)

Sander Bos (Netherlands)

Chan Lai Kuen (Malaysia)

Iris Leenknecht (Netherlands)

INTERACTIVE MEDIA CLASS CONTRIBUTIONS

This interactive media class is a collaboration between Josien Niebuur and Hermen Maat. Josien developed an introduction Max/MSP/Jitter to experiment with available sensors at the academy. By doing so students become experienced in the possibilities of 'object oriented programming', and at the same time students can make a piece of interactive artwork 'hands-on'.

HELENA VAN ZUYLEN (NEDERLAND)

Inspired by the actions of Yves Klein Helena developed a contemporary 'Cleansing Ritual' that can be activated and layered by the approaching visitor. It is a brave and vulnerable work.

Cleansing Ritual by Helena van Zuylen

In our daily routine of cleaning ourselves everybody has developed his or her own ritual. With my performance I want to both reveal and cover my presence and daily routine. I want to show that people layer their experiences by actions, again and again. By 'cleansing' myself with three different colours of paint, these layered daily routines are visualised. My body gets a new mixed colour. I am in a vulnerable naked situation where the visitor can layer me and cover me by their actions. I invite the visitor by his approach to the projected image to activate this process of covering me. My painting and washing ritual is controlled by the viewer. The distance to the image determines the amount of layers in my recorded video performance.





SUZANNE VELLEMA (NETHERLANDS)

Suzanne Vellema plays with empathy and pain, and makes the viewer feel uncomfortable in her 'abattoir'. 'Three swishing horsetails'.

My idea is to put three horsetails on the wall. When someone approaches the tails they start to swish. This idea developed from my fascination with horses; all my artworks deal with horses. This work is inspired by a few things:

1. Because of the economical crisis a lot of horse owners can't afford to keep their horses anymore. So they try to sell them. But the market for horses is not very good. So a lot of people have to bring their horses to the abattoir. The slaughterhouse sees the tail as garbage. I think this is disrespectful and I want the horse to live on in my art.
2. The tail is an important part of the horse. You can tell by the tail how the horse feels. If he is irritated, angry, excited or just happy.

3. I am very interested in shamanism. The horse plays a huge role in some shaman cultures. In those cultures they use horsetails to swish away dark and negative energy. They use the tails on drums. And shamans have tails as epaulettes on their shoulders, to show that they are in contact with the horse spirits.

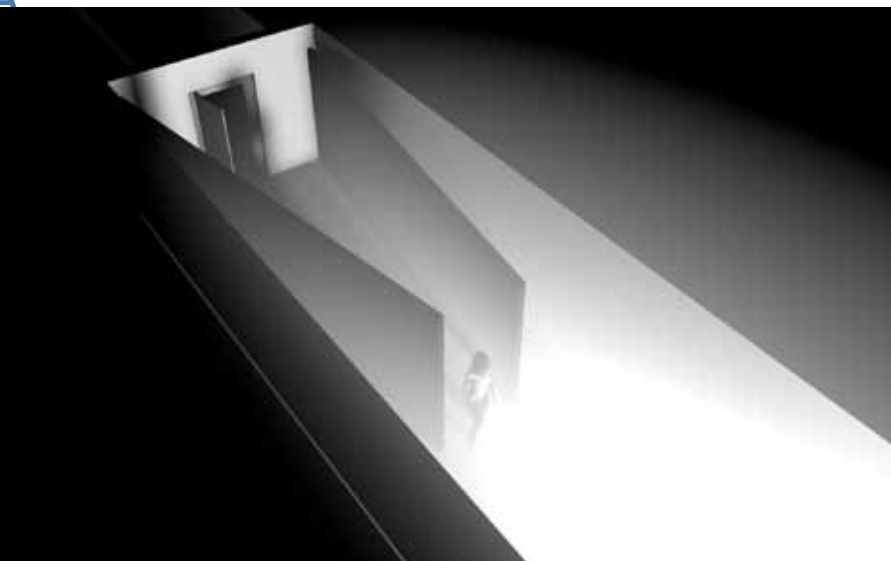
For me the horsetail on the wall creates a different perspective. The viewer gets 'swished' away like it is a dark and negative energy. The tails will be put on a tiled wall; I want the viewer to have an 'abattoir feeling'. This feeling is necessary because I want the viewer to feel uncomfortable to think about the energy of the tails. The tails will be attached to a car gas spring with a distance sensor, so the three tails will move separately and at different speeds, when a person walks by.

VANINA TSVETKOVA (BULGARIA)

Vanina Tsvetkova is a real installation maker. She addresses the audience very directly by making a talking pig's head, activated by your approach.

What would it be like if a pig started talking back? If it commented on your eating behaviour in a museum context? I hope it will make the visitor feel quite awkward and confronted with his or her own alienation. I like to create hilarious 3D worlds, which play with the 'comic and the grotesque'. For the theme class 'Host' I researched the possibilities of making the audience part of the work as a sculptor with interactive technologies which are new to me.





JORINE HOMAN (NETHERLANDS)

Jorine Homan will immerse you in a maze of light and darkness of which the boundaries are not tangible anymore.

The Door by Jorine Homan

The host in my plan is a door. A threshold to different spaces. The door controls the environment, and manipulates the subjective experience of the same space in different conditions. By manipulating the light and the size of the space, the visitor becomes aware of his

own body. The further the door opens, the brighter the light becomes. The size of the space decreases, as the wall moves towards you. The door consists of a dark and a light situation and generates both a cramped and a free experience. This creates an environment in which the experience of infinity and seclusion alternates.

Cindy Wegner

I want a green wailing pillow

CINDY WEGNER
(GERMANY)

*Comfort and discomfort, intimacy and privacy.
How do you translate 'emptiness' into an experience? Cindy knows how!*

1. An interactive sound pillow

The participant has to move his arms back and forth to press a pillow over his face. What is sound doing inside a pillow? When his voice hums into the pillow, consequently the voice will be distorted, it gives it a density, a vibration and a dull resonance. Inside the pillow there is a microphone activated by a sensor, which records a slice of the voice. The sounds will freeze and cross-fade in order to create a chorus effect. Speakers play out the sound over and over again, sliced, applied and turned up.

2. Content

Commitment and loss

Loss is "forever an internal foreign body", is what the French psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche writes. What he means is that the loss of something beloved becomes an integral part of us as we commit ourselves to it. It is often described as being destruc-

tive to internalize loss because it would lead inevitably to emptiness and melancholy. But I think it's an addition, it can be a sound humming inside yourself. An endless humming of the commitment we feel towards the loss. For the melancholic person the only way to keep the beloved object is to destroy it; he would empty it and empty out himself. Walter Benjamin claims that only intention can fend off this emptiness, and Goethe says that intention is an essential component of every work of art; art can fend it off. It can be an intention to show the ambivalence that wishes to hold on and to let go at the same time. Like the voice that gets out and tones hold on.

To make the ambivalence more clear within an action you have to intervene yourself. The action of lowering the volume of your voice opposes our inclination to do or say something clearly. It may be that the softer we speak, the more violent we are in our wish to say something important. Something that wants to be pushed out and is refused. In "Desire and Self-Intervention" Robert M. Gordon writes that we intervene ourselves if we "weaken those desires which would otherwise have directed our action".

LOTTTE MIDDENDORP (NETHERLANDS)

Lottte Middendorp already made several 'interactive books'. For this project she translated her memories into an interactive sound book.

Lotte Middendorp - Reed Herbarium

As a host of my project I would like to introduce you to a part of my childhood. My family lives in a harbour house, as my dad used to be one of the harbour men. When I was younger we spent a lot of time on the water; we had fun with nature. Sometimes the four of us were musicians when we whistled by blowing on reed leaves. I enjoyed this simple play very much because the tunes were so uncontrolled and strange, and we sounded like funny birds.

For this project I decided to dry some reed between paper sheets in a very thick book. With these dried leaves I made a herbarium of reed, sound and film.

You walk into a white room with a table and a chair placed against the wall.

You take a seat and then place the headphones, hanging at the side of the table, on your head.

The book lies in front of you. While you sit and watch it, there is a projection of waving reed. At the same time you will hear me telling something about this work. In this text I will invite you to blow into the small microphone in front of the book.

Each page contains a reed leaf, that I blew on when it was freshly picked.

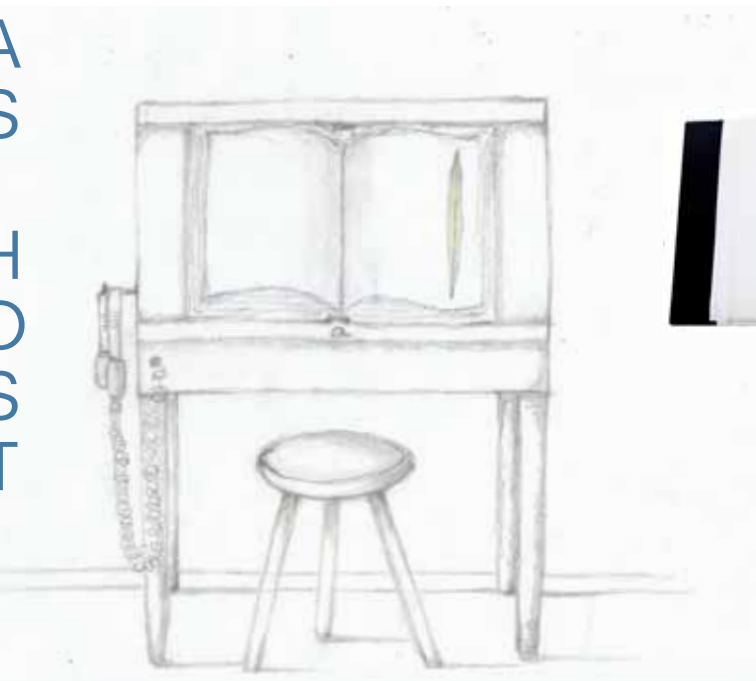
This sound I recorded and by blowing into the microphone, you will hear this whistle.

Because of the blowing the projection will pause for a moment.

The book contains ten pages with on each page a single dried leaf, which produces a unique and awkward sound.

Because I am still wondering about this nature experience of my youth.

It's beautiful, so simple and pure. That is what I would like to share with you.



SANDER BOS (NETHERLANDS)

What is the power of your brainwaves? Sander found a way to use these waves in a different and innovative way to manipulate the image. The work will be part of the Nacht van Kunst en Wetenschap (Night of Art and Science, June 1, 2013).

What if you could sculpt with just the power of your mind?

The aim of this artwork is to cultivate a more meditative and more aware mindset in a playful way. The artist will guide you in achieving this state of mind.

I want to connect this work to a 3D world, in which you can walk around with a pair of 3D glasses. The other participant can manipulate this world by means of his brainwaves.

This submerges the participant even more. In this space the participant can walk around. The experience is influenced as well by making use of warmth, smell and sound, which make the virtual space real.





CHAN LAI KUEN
(MALAYSIA)

Electronic art has the possibility of making witch-power look real. Chan Lai Kuen made a networked experience tangible for you. The work will be part of the Nacht van Kunst en Wetenschap (Night of Art and Science, June 1, 2013).

The Witch's Ring
Interactive Media Work

Eight chairs are placed in a circle; four of the chairs in Groningen, The Netherlands, and the other four in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Every chair is assigned to a unique voice of the pipe-organ. When each chair is occupied and in this way a click-switch is triggered, the voice assigned to the chair will be playing from the sound system.

Like the canon contrapuntal compositional technique in music, when someone is sitting on the second chair, the second voice will start playing, accompanying the first voice. The third till the eighth voice would be synching the previous voices once they are triggered by the click-switch. The full score plays when all eight chairs are occupied.

The idea is to construct a ring visually with the aid of the screen projected with live feed from both sides of the world. Each side of the space/world can observe and interact with the other side of the space/world through the screen/beamer by the choice of sitting on the chairs or not.

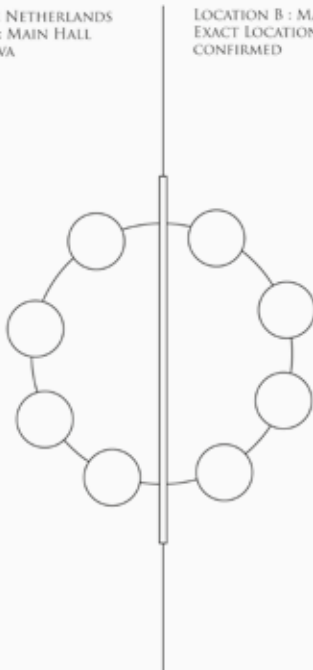
This work consists of a physical space and a visual space, to construct a similar experience in two different spaces/worlds with a ring of chairs and a set of voices. Since the full piece of music would only be played while all eight chairs are occupied, it would be really interesting to see how willing people are to co-operate in a group-like manner, like in a team. So this work of art needs a certain level of team work from eight strangers on two different continents to complete the work.

This work is about connecting people in a ring like the mycelia, the part of a mushroom which grows in a ring. That is why it is called the witch's ring.

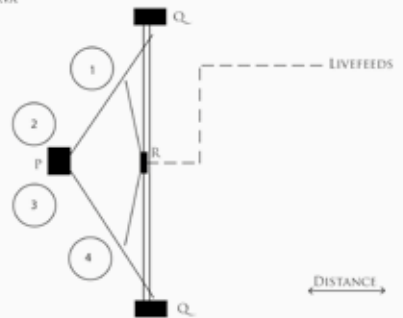
THE WITCH'S RING

LOCATION A : THE NETHERLANDS
EXACT LOCATION : MAIN HALL
ACADEMIE MINERVA

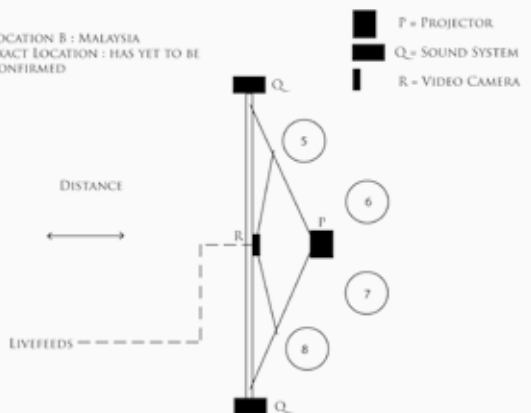
LOCATION B : MALAYSIA
EXACT LOCATION : HAS YET TO BE
CONFIRMED



LOCATION A : THE NETHERLANDS
EXACT LOCATION : MAIN HALL
ACADEMIE MINERVA



LOCATION B : MALAYSIA
EXACT LOCATION : HAS YET TO BE
CONFIRMED



P = PROJECTOR
Q = SOUND SYSTEM
R = VIDEO CAMERA



IRIS LEENKNEGT (NETHERLANDS)

Every year one of the projects by the interactive media students is selected for a presentation in the Tschumipavilion at the Herenplein in Groningen. This year Iris Leenknecht has been selected. She asked the question: Who is the ultimate Host? Answer: The King. No ceremony can be more meaningful than a ritual with a king. Iris' performance will question all your assumptions!

Monarchy versus Democracy in the Tuschmi-pavilion

You are cordially invited to be crowned king

On May 16, 2013 20.00 hours, at the Tuschmi-pavilion, Herenplein, Groningen

We (pluralis majestus) think everyone should be king in our democracy; We should be the rulers of our own country. We should decide what's good and what isn't for ourselves. Measures need to be taken for stability to return to our country. So that you as a citizen, as a family, as an employee know what you are supposed to do. As a consequence the fear, the stress, will decrease and all our disorders will be cured miraculously.

Golden Suzuki Alto

A golden Suzuki Alto (Golden Carriage) will arrive at 20.00 hours. The Tschumi-pavilion will be furnished with hundreds of crowns. You can choose your own unique crown and be crowned on the Throne, by Us. After every crowning, a portrait is made of the king. These portraits will be collected and made available on the internet. The crown will be yours forever!

Yours sincerely, Iris Leenknecht.



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In this work I show the position of the outsider which obviously crosses a line.

My research is about people's needs; what do they need to live a 'happy' life?

One of the things I noticed is the taboo on discussing people suffering from depression, burn-outs and on top of this the enormous growth in psychiatric disorders. The terms ADHD/ADD, all types of autism and borderline, are types of behaviour we are all familiar with nowadays.

Monopoly versus Democracy would be a better statement.

For as long as we can remember, we have been living in a country where monarchy and democracy are central. Rituals are part of this, such as the crowning of a new king or queen. Because of the information-age in which we find ourselves, there is a faster in- and output of information, which has made globalisation possible. The centre and the outskirts of companies can be very far apart. Which is why different types of work have been scattered all over the world in recent years.

In addition, the economy responds to consumers' needs, the economy interacts quickly in answering these needs. There is an increasing amount of products which change ever more rapidly and these products take on many different guises. In order to produce them, we need companies which are flexible. Before, companies worked with long-term plans. In this era, short-term plans are used because otherwise companies cannot serve a very flexible market. Due to this, an employee must specialise more than once. Also, it is becoming harder and harder to acquire a permanent work contract. Temporary contracts but also part-time jobs and unemployment have become a modern day phenomenon. Therefore it is not strange that many people feel empty. People's work ethos is disappearing, they do not know where they stand anymore and our standards of

living have become so high that it is hard to deal with this. It is because of the large monopolies/companies, that we have acquired these living standards. And now we have them we refuse to let them go. If the powers have shifted in this way, why do we still hang on to this monarchy which, in this sense, has absolutely no use?

THE URGENCY OF THE ROLE OF THE HOST

Afterword for The artist as a host

When I applied a year and a half ago for the job of professor of the research group Image in Context of the Centre of Applied Research and Innovation Art & Society of the Hanze University, Academy Minerva, my focal points were the name of the research group: *Image in Context* and the research assignment of the research centre: new roles of artists and designers in society.

The name of the research group can be read as something factual, because after all every image has a context (if only that of the White Cube). At the same time it involves an assignment: the context is an aspect you can put the focus on (or should put the focus on). While studying the image (the autonomous image, the public image) the research group involves the physical context, the discursive context and the social context. Within the context of the research centre Art & Society the term *context* refers to *society*. I can talk about this at length, especially from the position of the semiotician¹, but since here it concerns an afterword for a publication about the ‘artist as a host’ it makes more sense to move on to the second focal point of the research group: ‘new roles of artists and designers in society’.²

During the past few months I have gained a better understanding about two things. Firstly, the rather clumsy word ‘new’ in ‘new roles’. The tempting aspect of the word new lies the fact that new means that

1 A semiotician is a person who identifies with the position of semiotics. Semiotics is the discipline which studies the process of meaning-giving based on a conceptual framework which semiotics developed for this purpose (sign, meaning, code, denotation, connotation, icon, index, symbol are a few of the most well-known). Within semiotics there is a branch which calls itself pragmatics and in which the process of meaning-giving is studied in its own context. So, environmental factors are involved in the analysis and in the way in which a viewer understands a work of art.

2 *Society* puts the emphasis on the human relationships of the world in which we live. Art and Society places art in the context of a network in which people live together in a way which has been organised in one way or another. Society is the research object of sociology.

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a development is taking place, a movement of something that was to something that is or is going to happen. That is the beauty of this word. What is less beautiful about this word however, is that it supposes that that which is or is about to happen is completely distinguished from that which already was. And of course we can never know this. Usually the word new is used in the context of an advertisement in which new is a tempting promise. And that is certainly not the case here. Still, even in this context the word new means a promise, a promise that a difference is going to be made compared to what was; new in relation to what is now. I wonder if new is important or whether the word had better be replaced by another word, such as ‘urgent’. Urgent, namely, does not relate to what was, but to what is important now. Urgent is always urgent in a certain context. It concerns what is important NOW, what a society, a teaching culture and an artists’ culture needs right now. So, instead of new roles I would rather speak of urgent roles. And every time a role is considered urgent, it should be explained: urgent in which context? Urgent in relation to which developments? And possibly also, urgent for whom? Which allows the question to be asked of the artist as a host, a role suggested by Hermen Maat and Karen Lancel: what is the urgency of this role? What does the role of the host make possible what is important now? And to whom is this important? As you may have read in the contribution with which they start this publication, they are very aware of this. Hermen Maat and Karen Lancel create, and after this they continue to question their creation. The creation does not only not exist without the participation of an audience, it also develops itself endlessly because they study their creation from different perspectives.

Where the word ‘new’ in my opinion should be replaced, the word ‘role’ is a concept which entails much more than at first glance appears to be the case. It is a word which in questioning can reveal several dimensions. It is a useful concept which can help us look at the modern day art and design practice. The word role has a number of interesting connotations.³ Role refers to ‘game’. In a role you can be someone different compared to who you are outside of this role. A role creates a set of possibilities. In the role of a mother I can be someone else, someone I was not before I became a mother (and which allowed me to identify with this role). And I am not a professor, I have the role of a professor which, again, allows me to be someone I wasn’t before. Role in this sense is closely related to function. Roles provide artists and designers with the possibility of playing with

3 Signs (words, images, gestures) in semiotics have two kinds of meanings. A literal meaning, and a more associative meaning. In this way a Mercedes not only refers to a certain kind of car that looks a certain way (literal or denotative meaning) but also to a certain kind of vulgar richness (connotative meaning).

who they want to be, and also of not having to be the same person all the time. Within various contexts artist and designers can take on different roles. But a role is not a piece of clothing you can put on or take off. A role only exists if you believe in it, both you and the other person. A role lies on the boundary of fiction and reality.

The beauty of the role-play Hermen Maat and Karen Lancel made, is that they not only give themselves a role, but the audience as well, which turns the audience from audience to participant. Herein also lies the urgency of the role-play : it enables the audience to move from viewer (which is not a role) to participant (which is a role). Then, all of this takes place in a public space, which means that the citizen is asked to move from a space which is familiar to him, into a space in which a game is being played which is different from the world he has just come from. Whomever agrees to this, enters the world of the game and has to discover what the rules are, which parts there are to give away and which role he might obtain for himself. Hermen Maat and Karen Lancel's first contribution describes this process.

'This publication shows how the central concept of their artistic practice, 'the host', has been translated into two teaching modules. The artist as a host is a concept which fits the research group Image in Context perfectly. Not only because a role is developed in-depth, but also because it is a role which places the image in a context. In two modules of the department Autonomous Fine Art Hermen Maat moved the emphasis from the production of the work to the production of the transference of the work with the concept of 'the host'; from the pie to the party. One module explored and used the possibilities of interactive sensors which more or less automatically turned viewers into participants. Sensors need a viewer who causes motion which temporarily completes the work of art. As long as the viewer participates, there is motion. So there is only a party when the guest starts singing, eating pie, offering congratulations, etc. In this module the concept of 'the host' was not even necessary to create an art practice in which the maker turns into the host of an event in which the audience gets an active role.

In the other module Hermen Maat started testing the concept of the host with the students. He asked them not to think about the pie but about the party, where an artist could be the host. With this he not only placed the students in the role of the host, but he placed them in a role period. Not expressing yourself, not being allowed to put yourself in the shoes of your work of art, not the work of art as representation, but the role as representation. I don't know whether this was new for the students, but in any event, it was an additional approach which may not have been easy for all students. Role, play, context are completely

different concepts than feeling, concept, expression. Just like in their art, in his teaching Hermen Maat created a context which allows room for playing. This offers space, space for reflection and space for research and innovation.

The research group Image in Context wants to clarify artistic research practices in which not only the work of art is emphasised but also the way it relates to the world outside the work of art. This is why in the previous edition we talked about Bart Lodewijks, who took his students physically outside in order to look for the social connections which can be brought about with art. In this booklet Hermen Maat and Karen Lancel had the floor, because they stimulated the students to reposition their artistry from the position of the host, based on both technique and on 'role', 'play' and 'context' to create space for reflection through interaction.

Uitgave lectoraat Image in Context,
Kenniscentrum Kunst & Samenleving

Academie Minerva,
Hanzehogeschool Groningen

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KENNISCENTRUM KUNST & SAMENLEVING

The research group Image in Context is part of the Centre of Applied Research and Innovation Art & Society, which also comprises the research groups Lifelong Learning in Music and Popular Culture, Sustainability and Innovation. The Centre of Applied Research and Innovation Art & Society is where the School of Performing Arts (Prince Claus Conservatoire and Dance Academy Lucia Marthas) and the School of Fine Arts, Design & Pop Culture MINERVA combine their practice based research. The research centre conducts research into the exchange between art and society and the continually changing professional practice of artists. The objective is to make (future) artists aware of and to teach them to reflect on the different innovative and creative roles they can fulfil in this continually changing professional practice. In different types of collaborative connections, both within and outside the arts, artistic and social objectives can be connected and so reinforce each other. This will enhance the professional employability of artists.

LECTORATEN

Lifelong Learning in Music

Lector: Dr. Rineke Smilde (leading lector)

Associate lector: Drs. Evert Bisschop Boele

Popular Culture, Sustainability & Innovation

Lector: Dr. Anne Nigten

Image in Context

Lector: Dr. Anke Coumans

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